

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

301626Z May 05

ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	PERC-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00
	M-00	DCP-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-00
	NIMA-00	PA-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1690  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO  
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000863

SIPDIS

LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/05

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: LIFTING TERM LIMITS: REFERENDUM APPROACHES,  
CHARGES OF MANIPULATION

REF: NDJAMENA 384

Classified By: Political/Economic Officer Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) Summary: The public referendum on proposed constitutional amendments will be held June 6, and allegations of manipulation and irregularities abound. Opposition parties and private radio stations have filed court cases regarding flaws in the registration process, the electoral list, and government restrictions on radio broadcasts. The Supreme Court struck down a government ruling preventing radio broadcasts of political debates which the High Council for Communications is choosing to ignore. Other allegations of government manipulation are emerging, including intimidation tactics, bribery, and circulation of blank and re-usable registration cards. Opposition leaders do not anticipate any election-related violence and have called for a general stay-at-home strike on the day of the referendum. Any violence that occurs will likely be spontaneous outbreaks by disgruntled students. End Summary.

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WHAT'S AT STAKE?  
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2. (C) On June 6, registered Chadian voters will vote "oui" or "non" for several Constitutional amendments. The most important of which is the removal of presidential term limits. The non-existent Senate will be abolished and replaced with a Social and Economic Council, which will advise the President on key policy issues. The three day voting period for the nomads begins on June 3. The ruling Movement for Patriotic Salvation (MPS) central and neighborhood headquarters are adorned with MPS flags and signs promoting a "yes" vote. Most opposition parties are advising their supporters to boycott the referendum and observe a "ville morte" (i.e. a stay-at-home strike) on June

6. P/E officer met with party leaders Lol Mahamat Choua, Ibni Omar Saleh, and Saliu Ngarba, all of whom indicated that they have instructed their supporters to avoid any confrontations and to stay home. Interestingly, each of them indicated that if there is to be any trouble, it would likely be spontaneous, coming from university students or would be the result of a government provocation. Choua and Saleh advised that official U.S. participation in the Government's observer team would make the USG complicit in a completely fraudulent exercise.

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PROBLEMATIC REGISTRATION PROCESS AND ELECTORAL LIST  
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3. (C) The opposition charges that an analysis of the Government's published numbers for registration demonstrates significant irregularities. During a visit to Moundou and Sahr in early March, the then-Governor of Sahr Damyo and Deputy Governor of Moundou Lucas showed P/E officer and P/E assistant the Government's tallies of the number of Chadians

registered by administrative district. Both officials were surprised, particularly that more voters were registered in the northern and eastern parts of the country than elsewhere in the country. According to the Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), the country's population increased from 6 million in 1993 to 9.3 million in 2005. CENI registered 4.9 million voters. According to Saliu Ngarba, only 45 percent of Chadians are over 18 and eligible to vote so it is not possible to register 5 million out of 9 million people.

14. (C) The challenged numbers also come from the sparsely populated and logistically-challenging northern parts of Chad such as the B.E.T., where 92 percent of the potential voters were registered, Biltine, (71 percent) and Kanem (73 percent). Two more densely populated southern states, Logone Occidental and Logone Oriental each showed only a 39 percent of the population registered. Other southern states, including Logone Occidental, Logone Oriental, Tandjile, Moyen Kebbi, and Moyen Chari all showed decreases in the numbers of persons registered from two to 13 percent. Part of the explanation for the decreased numbers of registered voters in the south is the door-to-door registration process and calls by some opposition leaders to their southern constituents not to register. However, even Lucas maintained that the differences between the north and south are glaring, but

predictable because it is difficult to verify the lists in the northern part of the country. Both he and Damyo were concerned about fraud and the nomadic vote because nomads were allowed to register in one district but vote elsewhere, depending on where they are located on the days prior to the referendum.

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HUSHING THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA  
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15. (SBU) On May 4, the High Commission for Communications (HCC) issued an order prohibiting private radio stations from broadcasting political debate concerning the referendum. The HCC also stated that it would use a list of the 74 political parties for the public service broadcasting of their messages. For example, each party would get a chance to broadcast on the radio and television three times during the campaign period. Three minutes on the radio and two minutes on the television. The parties messages must be registered well in advance of their broadcast in the presence of a member of the HCC. Any message to be carried in a language other than French and Arabic must be reviewed by the HCC 48 hours in advance. The independent media took the case to court and on May 25, the Supreme Court suspended the HCC's prohibition. However, on May 27, HCC Chairman Moussa Dago announced that the court decision did not affect the HCC regulation that radio stations operated by community and private associations cannot broadcast political messages. The lawyer from the union of private radio station claimed that Dago is confusing radio stations run by community and private associations with private commercial radio stations. Ibni Omar Saleh, leader of the Party for Freedom and Development (PLD), praised the Court's decision, but said that in practice it is not important because the referendum is only a week away and private radio stations have effectively been silenced for the majority of the campaign period.

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OTHER ALLEGATIONS  
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16. (C) Other charges of ruling party and government manipulation are evident in the streets of N'Djamena. Several different sources, including an army officer, are reporting that members of the Presidential Guard have been given police uniforms and have been deployed throughout N'Djamena, particularly at the major traffic circles. Members of the Deby family, including his wives and children, have been seen giving "small gifts" to residents in various neighborhoods. In meetings with government officials, traditional leaders, particularly in the east, have reportedly been told to "get out the yes vote" of their people. Neighborhood chiefs have been given blank registration cards that can reportedly be used more than once. Finally, opposition deputies in the National Assembly and other opposition leaders are bringing a new court case alleging that there are discrepancies between the amendments the body voted on and what is being presented to the public.

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) Most N'Djamena residents believe that the outcome of the referendum is already a done deal. For this reason, the majority of the opposition has not mounted a concerted "no" campaign and is instead calling for a general stay-at-home

strike. Given the opposition's non-militant position, we expect widespread apathy on June 6, with only MPS supporters going to the polls. Nonetheless, the Government appears prepared to clamp down on any trouble that could arise. We will be seeing the President of the CENI this week to respond to a formal invitation to participate on an official monitoring mission.  
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